1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
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About the Authors

C. W. M. HART was born in Australia and became an American citizen in 1933. He studied at the Universities of Sydney, Chicago, and London; and has taught anthropology at the London School of Economics, University of Toronto, and the University of Wisconsin where he is now professor of anthropology. He was associate editor of the *American Anthropologist* from 1949 to 1952 and was recently elected president of the Society for Applied Anthropology.

Arnold R. Pilling, a Californian, studied at the University of California at Berkeley. He was a Fulbright Fellow to Australia in 1953 and 1954 and spent most of that time studying the culture of the Tiwi. He is now a member of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Wayne State University in Detroit.

About the Book

This is a case study of a system of influence and power which is based on a strange currency. The currency is woman. Newborn females, nubile marriageable females, toothless old hags — all are valuable in Tiwi terms. Because men compete for prestige and influence through their control over women, women have the value of a scarce commodity. Under this system there are no illegitimate children, no unmarried females of any age, and wives are either very much older or very much younger than their husbands.

A vivid picture of Tiwi life, as viewed from within the culture, emerges in this book. The reader is not made an outsider, left to peer into a dimly understood, formalized, alien way of life. Rather, he is taken inside the family group, by the night's campfire. He becomes a witness to angry quarrels, a participant in involved machinations aimed at success — as defined by the Tiwi. He comes to know individual Tiwi as real people.

This book is a study of social interaction. But it is also a study of culture change. Much happened between Hart's and Pilling's visits to the Tiwi. These changes are described, and we see them in the context of the period of Tiwi contacts with the outside world.

GEORGE AND LOUISE SPINDLER
General Editors

Stanford, California
December 1959

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Preface

HART WORKED among the Tiwi during 1928 and 1929, and in Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4 summarizes the main aspects of their culture as it was at that time. Pilling's fieldwork was carried out during 1953 and 1954, and he outlines in Chapter 5 the contacts of the Tiwi with the outside world before and up until the coming of the first missionaries in 1911, and in Chapter 6 describes the modifications in Tiwi culture that have occurred since 1930. It is rare for two anthropologists who have studied the same tribe at widely separated times to collaborate in writing about them, hence it is worth mention (1) that the two anthropologists had never met nor even written to each other until after Pilling had returned to the United States in 1955; (2) that when they finally got together during 1957-1958 to plan and write the present book, they were both astonished at how little basic disagreement there was between them. Arguments about each other's statements have been numerous and prolonged, but almost invariably these concerned matters of detail or emphasis. The chief result of the collaboration has been the discovery, by each author, and exciting for both, of how well the other knows his Tiwi. This is uncommon enough in anthropology to be noteworthy. We are both grateful to the Tiwi for having brought us together and we are both impressed by the fact that the Tiwi who brought us together were the same complicated but delightful people, despite the twenty-five year interval in our respective sojourns among them.

C.W.M.H.
A.R.P.

Madison, Wisconsin
Detroit, Michigan
December 1959

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forward to the periodic visits of the luggers, for they brought a new source of iron and trinkets.

Joe Cooper, the Australian buffalo hunter who had been chased out of the islands on his first attempt in 1897, returned again a few years later having first kidnaped two Tiwi women so that his mainland native helpers of the Yuwatja (Iwaidja) tribe near Cape Don could learn the language. When they had, he returned with a strong mainland detachment and well equipped with guns and horses. By 1900, European firearms were efficient weapons and a Tiwi spearman no longer could expect to kill a man armed with a modern rifle. Cooper is said never to have gone unarmed in his fifteen or so years (from about 1900-1916) as "King of Melville Island."[4]

In retrospect it is apparent that the agent through whom the Tiwi learned of the outside world was not Cooper, the white man, but his companions the Yuwatja (Iwaidja). They were more numerous and more approachable than Cooper, and several of them even had Tiwi wives whom they had captured. Tiwi accounts of these captives are noteworthy. It was the young Tiwi men hanging around Cooper's camp who suggested to the Yuwatja that they go and capture, by force of arms, Tiwi females who had recently become widows. The young men were thus performing their customary role of agents in widow remarriage—but in this case for foreign clients.

Cooper and his Yuwatja camped at various localities on Melville Island until about 1916 when their last base, at Paru opposite the site of the Mission, was abandoned and he and his mainlanders withdrew from the islands. It was this last camp at Paru that was made headquarters by Sir Baldwin Spencer, the well-known Australian anthropologist, when he visited the Tiwi in 1912.[5]

While Cooper was at Paru he was also visited by a young Alsatian priest, Father Francis Xavier Gsell, M. S. C., who was contemplating establishing a mission on adjacent Bathurst Island. Cooper tried to discourage Father Gsell by telling him that the Bathurst Islanders had guns and were dangerous; apparently Cooper did not want any missionaries around his rough-and-ready establishment. But Father Gsell did not scare easily; in June 1911 he returned and built his mission station on the southeast corner of Bathurst Island, where it still stands today. Cooper left Paru permanently about five years later.

By 1916, five years after its founding, the Mission had two French priests, several French nuns and some Filipino workmen, and a lugger which ran to and from Port Darwin once a month. It was not until the nuns came that the local Tiwi put any trust in the missionaries; they could not understand why a man who claimed to be as important as Father Gsell claimed to be did not have any wives. When the nuns arrived, the Tiwi were more ready to accept the priest as "a big man" and began to bring their women around.

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[4] Hardly a year goes by without a newspaper in Australia running a Sunday supplement article on Cooper's stay at Melville Island. Such stories often are titled "The King of Melville Island" and are normally extremely romanticized.

[5] Spencer 1914. Spencer's account of the Tiwi is remarkably inaccurate and confused. On this trip to the Northern Territory in 1912 he was without his usual collaborator, Gillen.

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INTRODUCTION

MELVILLE ISLAND (Fig. 1), the research field of the 1954 National Geographic expedition, is, with the exception of Tasmania, the largest of the Australian islands. Eighty miles from east to west, and seventy from north to south, it rises barely five hundred feet above the sea. Its level surface is covered with a monotonous grey-green forest of eucalypts and acacias, whose monotony is broken only by the steep cliffs and sandy beaches of the coastline, the salt-water creeks which cut deeply into the northern coasts, and the almost impenetrable mangrove swamps that line those waterways.

Between Melville Island and the mainland are the swiftly running tideways, the reefs and shoals of the Clarence and Dundas Straits, tideways so dangerous that, before the installation of a series of flashing light-buoys, no ocean-going ship would attempt to navigate their broken waters in the darkness.

Abel Tasman, in 1644, was the first European to sail along the east, north, and west coasts of Melville Island and the adjacent Bathurst Island,[1] naming Cape Van Diemen and Van Diemen Gulf after the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies. As Tasman's account of that journey was lost, we do not know whether he actually landed on the islands, or only saw them in the distance.

Sir Philip King circumnavigated the two islands in 1818 and in 1824 the British Government, both to prevent the French from settling along the northern coasts of Australia and to protect British commerce from the rapidly expanding Dutch trade, established a military post at Fort Dundas, on the Apsley Straits. After five unhappy years the authorities moved the garrison to Port Essington, on the Coburg Peninsula, on the mainland, but not before both Sir Gordon Bremer (12th Nov. 1824) and Major Campbell (1834, pp. 135–60) had made some excellent observations on aboriginal graves, burial poles, bark paintings and canoes.

In the early days of this century, a buffalo hunter, Joe C. Cooper, having gained the confidence of the warlike people of Melville Island, known as the Tiwi tribe, established a camp near Cockle Point (Fig. 1) on the south-western corner of Melville Island. There he earned a living shooting buffaloes for their hides, buffaloes whose forbears had escaped from the settlement at Fort Dundas.

[1] Melville and Bathurst Islands, separated by the narrow Apsley Straits, are both a geographic and cultural unit.

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After Cooper had established himself a number of investigators, Brown in 1905, Klaatsch in 1906, Spencer and Basedow in 1911, and Fry in 1913, paid short visits to the Islands, and recorded valuable information on the aborigines and their ceremonial life.

Following their departure no research work was carried out until 1929, when Hart spent a year or more among the aborigines of Melville and Bathurst Islands. But though Hart must have collected a great deal of data among the almost untouched aborigines of those times, he has published only two short papers on their customs. (Hart, 1930, pp. 167–80; pp. 280–290.)

Again there was a lag in time, except for a short paper by Harney and Elkin (1942, pp. 228–34), until Pilling in 1953, stationed at the Bathurst Island Sacred Heart Mission, spent over a year studying aboriginal life and social organization.[1]

In 1954 the National Geographic Society's expedition established a camp at Snake Bay on the north coast of Melville Island (Fig. 1), and for six months studied the ethnology, the geology and the ornithology of the area. Although the National Geographic Society of America provided the bulk of the funds, Mr. John Bonython of Adelaide financed the geological survey of Melville and Bathurst Islands.

The expedition party of American and Australian scientists was an excellent example of international co-operation. It was made up of Miss Jane Goodale, ethnologist, and Dr. Carleton Coon, Professor of Anthropology, both from the University of Pennsylvania; Mr. David Parsons, ornithologist from Yale University; Mr. Brian Daily, geologist from the University of Adelaide; Mr. William E. Harney, guide, Mr. George Joy, cook, and myself, as leader and ethnologist.

Our combined research covered a wide field. Miss Goodale concentrated on the place of the women and children in the community, Mr. Parsons collected and studied the birds of the island, Mr. Daily, by an examination of the outcropping rocks, established the geological history of Melville and Bathurst Islands, whilst I, apart from the duties of leadership, concentrated on the art, myth, and particularly the burial ceremonies.

During their visit, Dr. Carleton Coon and his wife made a special study of the physical characteristics of the aborigines.

I chose Melville Island as a centre of research, because it was evident from the scattered writings of Basedow, Fry, Hart, Harney, Spencer and

[1] The Sacred Heart Mission was established on Bathurst Island, opposite Cooper's camp, during 1911.

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others that the culture of the Melville and Bathurst Islanders was markedly different from that of the adjacent mainland people.

It seemed evident, also, that this difference in the cultures was the result of isolation for which two possible factors were responsible: (a) the natural water barrier created by the Dundas and Clarence Straits (Fig. 1), and (b) the inability of the Tiwi to cross those swift and dangerous tideways in their primitive canoes. These canoes consisted of no more than a folded sheet of eucalyptus bark, sewn together at either end with strips of lawyer vine, caulked with mud, and strengthened at the gunwales with light saplings. The old men of Melville Island assured me that, before Cooper brought across the mainland wooden canoe (1905) bark canoes were their only means of water transport.

I am convinced, from my personal experience with similar canoes in north-eastern Arnhem Land, and my sea journeys across the Dundas and Clarence Straits, that the bark canoes of the Tiwi were far too weak to have withstood the buffetings of those turbulent waters. Nor would it have been possible for the mainlanders to have made the journey before they acquired the wooden canoes from the Malays, which reliable historical records indicate was not before the end of the eighteenth century.[8] Previous to that time, these people would have had only a bark canoe similar to that used by the Melville and Bathurst Islanders. It would be some time, too, after the aborigines acquired their new wooden craft, before they would be sufficiently skilled to make that perilous journey to Melville Island, even had they wished to do so. Further, the Tiwi were notably unfriendly and killed anyone who visited their shores. It is likely, then, that during the historically short time that the aborigines of the mainland possessed the wooden canoe, their visits would have had little, if any, effect on the culture of the Tiwi.

From this evidence, it appears certain that for an unknown, and possibly a lengthy period, the aborigines of the Tiwi tribe have been almost, if not completely, isolated from outside cultural influences.

This supposition is supported by Hart (1930, p. 170), who states that, "It was impossible, in fact, quite unnecessary, for them (the Tiwi) to visit the mainland in their bark canoes, . . . Until the advent of white men, the Melville Islanders were not aware that any other people existed but themselves."

Foelsche (1882, p. 17), however, states that "The Melville Islanders occasionally visited the mainland for the purpose of stealing lubras (women),

[8] Mountford, 1956, p. 410.

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in which they invariably succeeded. Their canoes and weapons were similar to the mainland."[6]

The probability that the Tiwi have been isolated from external influences for a long time is still further supported by their culture. Their artefacts are remarkably simple—they do not even possess a spear-thrower or small mounted stone tools—their art forms and ceremonial life are unlike those in any other part of Australia, there are no secret rituals, and the social status of the women is on a much higher plane than that of any other aboriginal women.

[6] From the evidence given above we can safely discard this writer's statement. Foelsche, who was a police officer in Darwin, probably quoted a rumour without checking its accuracy.

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CHAPTER II

The Creation Period

WHATEVER differences may exist between the Melville Island cultures and those of the mainland, and, in some aspects, those differences are considerable, the creation stories indicate that the two cultures sprang from the same source.[1]

At the close of the creation period, both on Melville Island and the mainland, the original creators, men and women, were transformed, or transformed themselves, into various creatures, plants, natural forces or heavenly bodies.

Although I would not claim that the list of totems is complete, I feel certain that the aboriginal artists pictured, on the bark paintings, most of the areas created by their mythical forbears. More detailed research may reveal additional totemic places.

The list of the thirty-four totemic ancestors illustrated on the bark paintings is curiously unbalanced in its distribution. More than a third of these are trees, almost all eucalypts. The remaining four groups are: the natural forces, creatures of the air, the sea, and one inanimate totem, i.e. red ochre. Neither land animals nor reptiles are referred to in the bark paintings of the totemic places, although they appear in the myths.

These facts contrast strongly with the Central Australian beliefs regarding their totemic creatures (Mountford, 1948, p. 23; Spencer and Gillen, 1899, p. 387), where almost every living thing, particularly the creatures, took some part in the creation of the topography; plant totems are uncommon in Central Australia.

The same Central Australian characteristics are also evident in the myths of Groote Eylandt (Mountford, 1956, p. 21), although in the adjacent Arnhem Land, the great creators, i.e., the *Wawalik* Sisters (Warner, 1937, p. 250), and the *Djunkgao* Sisters (Berndt, 1952; Mountford, 1956, p. 267; Warner, 1937, p. 336), made the bulk of the topography, plants and creatures.

Although the Groote Eylandt pantheon, like that of Melville Island, originated as men and women, they were, almost without exception, changed to non-human totems, whereas the great creators of Arnhem Land, the *Wawalik* and the *Djunkgao* Sisters, have always remained human.

[1] Little research has been carried out on the creation stories of the Australian aborigines; Spencer and Gillen (1899, p. 387) giving the most detailed account.

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2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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6. THE BARK PAINTINGS OF THE TOTEMIC PLACES

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The aborigines of Melville Island produced forty-five bark paintings dealing with the totemic localities of Melville and Bathurst Islands. The assistance of the two aboriginal artists, *Tjamalampua* and *Matumerinita*, and Mr. W. E. Harney, who had spent many years on the islands, coupled with the aboriginal names on the official map of Melville and Bathurst Islands, and my increasing knowledge, enabled me to locate the approximate position of twenty-five totemic areas associated with the bark paintings.

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The Honey-eater Bird-man, Tukimbini, at Murupianga

Four bark paintings deal with the myth of *Tukimbini* and the totem place he created at Murupianga, south-eastern Melville Island; Pl. 4A, B; Pl. 4C, D; Pl. 6C, D; Pl. 7A.

The circle *a*, on Pl. 4A, B, is a mangrove swamp on a low island adjacent to Murupianga, *b*, *b*, and *p*, *p*, *p*, being rocks on its shore. The long sandy beach at Murupianga is shown at *d*, and a shoal at *j*. At *c* is a stingray, *h*, a dugong, *k*, a turtle, and *l*, a diamond fish. At *f*, *f*, etc., are piles of dead leaves on the beach, and at *e*, *e*, *e*, and similar designs, stringy-bark trees growing along the shore. A freshwater spring is at *t*, with two trees growing from its banks. Bunches of sea-weed are at *g*, and *r*, *r*, *r*, and at *s*, on the left-hand side of the painting, are the tree-covered uplands at Murupianga. The totemic place, Wuriupi, created by the woman, *Wuriupranala*, and her son, is at *m*.

On Pl. 4C, D, a jungle near the shore at Murupianga,[37] is indicated by the central black disc, *g*, and the camps of the bird-man, *Tukimbini*, are shown by the symbols, *a*, *a*, etc. The circle, *d*, *d*, pictures high, white cliffs, adjacent to the totemic jungle; *k*, is a monsoon forest tree, and *f*, *f*, its limbs; at *h*, *h*, are living paper-bark trees, at *b*, *b*, *b*, dead jungle trees; and at *c*, *c*, etc., poisonous yams, similar to the *kulama* (Pl. 44D), which *Tukimbini* created for food. The dots on the painting indicate the red seeds of a jungle vine lying on the ground.

Pl. 6C, D, is one side of a *pukamuni* basket;[38] the holes at *a*, *a*, show that it is a female basket.

[37] In the companion bark painting, Pl. 4A, B, the totemic place is a mangrove swamp. Within the same area, as with *Mundubuku*, south-western Bathurst Island, several adjacent localities are associated with the same totemic being.

[38] Klaatsch (1907), p. 577, who saw this type of basket on an old grave, states that, according to the aborigines, it indicated the burial place of a woman. Though it may be that Klaatsch was correct, my informants simply referred to the *pukamuni* baskets as male and female, as they did to male and female *pukamuni* spears (Pl. 32A, B). No female baskets were used at the *pukamuni* of the woman, *Mukapini*.

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The Eucalyptus-tree woman, Timarai-inga, at Mandumpi

Pl. 12A pictures the totem place of a eucalyptus-tree woman, *Timarai-inga*, a small rocky island, near the coast at Mandumpi, north-western Melville Island.

The black diamond shapes indicate bands of yellow ochre, and the light-coloured designs, *a*, *a*, etc., white ochres in the cliff face at Mandumpi. The barred panels, *b*, *b*, symbolize a freshwater stream which flows into the sea. The chevrons throughout the design picture ferns growing among the rocks.

Although I did not gather specific details of the totemic story, it is safe to assume that *Timarai-inga* was the creator of this totemic place.

The Eucalyptus-tree woman, Pungulu, at Patuapuru

The totemic place of the eucalyptus-tree woman, *Pungulu*, is at Patuapuru (Deception Point), northern Bathurst Island.

The horizontal lines *b*, *b*, on Pl. 14C, D, symbolize the open sea at Patuapuru, and *a*, *a*, etc., on the top of the painting, high light-coloured cliffs. At *c*, is another cliff of reddish colour, and *d*, *d*, etc., are the many rocks on the beach which are covered at high tide.

The long panel *f*, *f*, on the left-hand side of the painting, is the open beach at Patuapuru, and the vertical panels *e*, *e*, etc., are parallel lines of sand-ridges behind the beach.

In the centre line of the painting, at *h*, and *n*, are two casuarina trees, and at *k*, is a freshwater lagoon on the banks of which are many unidentified jungle trees. A high sandhill is indicated at *m* (upper right), and the marine grass on the sea-shore, by the cross-hatching on the background.

The Eucalyptus-tree woman, Aragoutourina,[39] *at Putawini*

The first camp of *Aragoutourina* was at Puntubu, at the headwaters of the Tjipripu River, central Melville Island, where she stayed for a while. She then travelled south-west over the watershed to Kuruwu River which empties its water into the Apsley Straits. After making this water-course, *Aragoutourina* walked to Putawini Point, western Bathurst Island,[40] where she created the topography and natural history of the surrounding country.

A jungle near Putawini is represented on Pl. 14A, B, by the central white

[39] A red-flowering eucalypt locally known as the bloodwood.
[40] Called Marloo Point on the official maps.

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CHAPTER III

The Pukamuni Ceremony

765 182 THE burial ceremonies of the aborigines of Melville and Bathurst Islands, based on the *pukamuni* of the mythical man, *Purukupali*, are, by far, the most important events in their ceremonial life.

These ceremonies, which allow the aborigines full expression for their grief, provide, at the same time, a complete cultural outlet for their philosophical beliefs, their music, their art and their dancing. No one, watching these [781] primitive rituals, night after night, could fail to be impressed by the obvious pleasure experienced by both the participants and the onlookers.

●114 765 Spencer (1928, pp. 647–52), is the only investigator to describe and illustrate any details of the *pukamuni* ceremony. Although he saw but one day of the ceremonials, and that of the closing rituals, he records, briefly, many of the procedures which we witnessed in 1954, i.e., the rite of fire-jumping (p. 73), the spearing of the grave (p. 83), and (p. 89), the "spearing" of one of the participants and the erecting of the poles. This evidence shows 177 765 that, in spite of the disturbing effects of civilization and the complete ecclesiastical ban on Bathurst Island, the *pukamuni* ceremony is still a vital force in the lives of the Tiwi people.

123 During the six months the expedition was on Melville Island, Miss Jane Goodale, Mr. W. E. Harney and I witnessed some, or all of the rituals of four *pukamuni* ceremonies; one of a man, *Waniamperi*, who had been buried within half a mile of our camp; another of an old woman, *Makapini*, who, against the wishes of her relatives, had been buried in the mission cemetery on Bathurst Island; still another of a premature infant; and, only a few weeks before I left Melville Island, one of *Nulatini*, the deceased wife of our helper, *Pulanimbuwi*.

123 128 I will describe the burials of *Waniamperi* and *Nulatini*, and the final rituals of *Waniamperi* and *Makapini*. However, as we saw, in all, twenty-seven *ilanias*, the general pattern of which was similar, I will describe but five of them; three belonging to *Waniamperi*, one to *Makapini* and one to *Nulatini*.[44] The short rituals, associated with the dead infant, will be treated as a separate unit.

[44] The final rituals took place after my departure from Melville Island. These will be dealt with by Miss Goodale.

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(a) One of the first series, when the "workers" were appointed, which was held in the main camp.

(b) One of the second series, held at a ceremonial ground mid-way between the first and the place of burial.

(c) An *ilanie* performed by the Bathurst Island group who attended to take part in the final *pukamuni* rituals.

(a) The First Ilanias

The first series of *ilanias* was performed on a ceremonial ground, about forty feet in diameter, adjacent to *Wurarbuti's* camp. All stones and tree roots had been dug out so that the dancers would not injure their feet. In the centre of the dancing circle, or *milimika*, a fire was laid ready for the later ritual of *wandiatapinda*, or fire-jumping,[80] a ritual which was carried out at most but not all of the *ilanias* (Pl. 24a). At some of the later *ilanias*, particularly at the second *milimika*, aborigines, close relatives of the dead, performed a similar ritual by climbing a tree at the base of which others lit a fire of grass and dead leaves (Pl. 23c).

Although I suspect that the ritual of jumping over the fire once had a deeper significance, the present day belief is that the fire, by burning the hair on the legs of the aborigines, protects them from stumbling over logs; from their limbs becoming tired on long journeys, or from dead trees falling on them as they travel through the forest. The smoke from the fire also brought them good health. No women took part in the *wandiatapinda* rituals, although the men often held their small children in the smoke.

Wurarbuti, the ceremonial leader or *alouwia* (frontispiece) of the *Waniamperi's pukamuni* rituals, was an intelligent, sophisticated aboriginal, who had worked for long periods in Darwin, and, more recently, had visited the southern States to dance before the Queen of England.

Because of his knowledge of European ways and the goods of the white man, the songs and dances of this first series of *ilanias* were a curious mixture of the old and the new cultures. Although most, if not all, of the dances performed at the *ilanias* are traditional and totemic, it is permissible to modify them for the song of the moment.

The ceremony opened when the assembled aborigines, about twenty of them, standing within the *milimika*, gave the low-pitched honey call, with the high-pitched mosquito call, which precedes and finishes all *ilanias*.

[80] Spencer (1928, p. 648), saw this rite at Cockle Point, on Apsley Straits (Fig. 1), during 1911.

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announced that he had bought enough food from the store at the settlement to feed all the men who were to cut the poles.[61]

Following this announcement, the chief woman mourner, *Prupadau*, whose privilege it was to decide on the size of the burial poles, marked with her toe, in the dust of the *milimika*, the length and thickness of a series of oversized poles.

This led to a great deal of discussion between the leader, *Wurarlui*, and the woman, *Prupadau*, before he finally persuaded her to reduce the dimensions of the poles to a reasonable size. *Prupadau* wanted the poles for her relative to be as many and as large as possible.

This matter settled, the "workers" brought a number of steel axes into the *milimika*. The *alawia*, painting the handles white and putting red cross lines on the blades, stood the axes in the centre of the dancing ground. Then both the *alawia* and the other performers walked around the axes singing the telephone song.

A series of traditional dances followed, representing *Jirakui*, the white-headed sea-eagle (Pl. 30j), *Puruti*, the sea-osprey, and *Tjalui*, the jabiru (Pl. 29A).[62] Two women and two young boys performed the shark (*Tadu-wale*) dance (Pl. 25c), the ritual finishing with the honey and mosquito calls. The "workers" picked up their axes and walked away, accompanied by everyone except *Prupadau*, who remained behind, still chanting the *amburu* song of mourning.

(*b*) *The Second Ilanias*

The second series of *ilanias* was performed about halfway between *Wurarlui's* camp and the burial ground.

In this series, we were able to see the traditional pattern of the *ilanias* in operation, including the return and feeding of the "workers" after their day's labour of cutting the poles near the grave site. The songs and dances, too, instead of referring, as in the first *ilanias*, to the goods of the white man, his radio and his telephones, dealt almost exclusively with dances belonging to the locality of Wallu, north-eastern Melville Island, the country of *Waniamperi's* father and the totemic place of fresh water, *Andjalui* (p. 42).

This series of *ilanias* could be divided into five sections,

[61] At the present time, this is just a traditional gesture, reminiscent of the days when it was the duty of the *pukamuni* group to feed the workers while they cut and painted the poles (Pl. 25B).

[62] In a creation myth, the jabiru is called *Tipuru-andunga*. It is likely that the bird has several names. Hart (1930, p. 280), draws attention to the multiplicity of names among the Tiwi.

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765 then, with the group, returned quietly to their companions among the poles."

(*b*) *The Songs and Dances*[78]

On the return to *milimika* A (Fig. 4), *Wurarbuti* and his wife mimed, to the accompaniment of appropriate songs, paddling a canoe, with their hands around one of the poles. This was followed by a man and his wife, who acted, with considerable detail, the making of a bark canoe; stripping the bark from [396] the tree; holding the bark over a fire to make it flexible; folding the bark and sewing the ends together, and the final launching.

By the time this act was over, it was dark. The aborigines from both *milimikas* retired to the nearby forest, lit their fires and cooked their food. There were no ceremonies during the evening, except, occasionally, some woman left her camp and wailed among the deserted *pukamuni* poles.

533 About 8 o'clock on the morning of the last day, the *pukamuni* men opened
539 the ceremonies with the honey and mosquito calls. These calls were followed
765 by a number of songs, chanted by *Wurarbuti* and some of his companions, which referred to the mythical boobook owl-man, *Purujikini*, and the instructions he gave to his fellow performers at the first *kulama* ceremony (p. 123). They were:

"Make the *milimika* large and clean for many people and when it is ready, sing first, then dance round the ring."

"You will paint yourself beside the *milimika*."

"When you decorate yourself for the *kulama*, put white on one side of your face, yellow on the other, and red down the middle of your hair. And as you dance, your wives will help you, as my wife, *Pinioma*, the owl-woman, once did for me."

"You sing, *Mikinatrina*[79] (a *kulama* initiate), and we will follow."

"When you sing in a *kulama*, put the cockatoo feathers, *primitiki*, in your hair, and the wind will shake them."

While those songs were being chanted, other men mimed the appropriate action.

[78] Although the aborigines did not explain the ritual, it is likely that the first man looked for and thought he saw the *mopaditi* of *Waniamperi*. On the second occasion, *Marawani*, a near relative, hunted the dead man's spirit away. This ritual, in a modified [114] form, took place at the two other *pukamunis* we witnessed. Spencer (1928, p. 648) mentions the same ritual.

[79] The songs and dances in this series were neither traditional nor totemic. They were composed usually by a number of performers, especially for the occasion, and quite an amount of thought went into their production.

[80] During the initiation of the *Mikinatrina* at the *kulama* ceremony, he performs his first dance amid general applause.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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533 535 766 woman picking up the fruit and putting it in a bark basket. Then, bending over, as if carrying a heavy load, he danced around the *milimika* to the rhythm of the song and the beating sticks.

The rituals continued by the *pukamuni* men chanting a series of songs, first [177] about a boat, then its propeller, its sails and, finally, about the raising of its anchor. During the chanting, one or more aborigines, dancing to the rhythm of the songs, mimed the relevant actions.

766 These dances being finished, the participants of the *pukamuni*, putting their arms around the posts, cried the *amburu*, the mourning song; the men gave the honey and mosquito call, and the burial rituals were over.[90]

6. THE FACIAL DECORATIONS

302 The facial and body decorations of the men and women of the Tiwi, particularly those used during the final *pukamuni* rituals are, by far, the most colourful and elaborate of those used by any Australian aboriginal tribe.

During the early days of the century these decorations attracted the atten- [114] tion of Basedow (1913, pp. 291–321); Klaatsch (1907, p. 589), and Spencer (1928, p. 669), although nobody, of more recent years, has shown any interest in them.

Although there is little doubt that the desire for artistic expression and [775] personal beautification are factors behind this practice,[91] the fundamental idea [517] is that of camouflage, i.e., that the designs will so conceal the identity of the men and women taking part in the ceremony, that the *mopaditis*, who are present at both the *pukamuni* and *kulama*, will not recognize them.

So at both the *ilanias* and the final rituals of the *pukamuni*, everyone, even the little children who look on, is decorated. At the *ilanias*, however, which are performed every evening for some weeks, the decorations are usually simple and often crudely applied. Nevertheless, the aborigines, believing the [775] *mopaditis* to be stupid folk and easily misled, consider these simple decorations are an adequate safeguard.[92]

Pl. 28 illustrates a number of facial designs. Most of the originals of these [126] illustrations are colour photographs. Some, however, are based on crayon drawings[93] which my informants made to show the designs they would use for certain totems.

[90] See p. 61 for beliefs in the *mopaditis* of a small child.

[832] [91] The men claimed that when their face and body decorations were good, the women were attracted to them.

[92] Mountford, 1956, p. 437, illustrates a small child decorated as an *ilania*.

[93] The illustrations based on crayon drawings are, Pl. 28a, b, c, d.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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765 778 Pl. 32 illustrates a number of objects used in the *pukamuni* and *kulama* rituals.

[411] [531] Pl. 32A, B, are two of the beautifully carved ceremonial spears known respectively as the male *pukamuni* spear, *tunkaringa*, and the female spear, *tunkaguni*. These are made purely as a gift to the dead, they appear to have no other function.

[114] [322] [412] At the time of Spencer's visit to Melville Island during 1911, the aborigines told him that these spears were cut with cockle shells. During 1920 a Melville Island man in Darwin gave me the same information, adding that the making of a double-sided female spear, 32B, with shell tools occupied an old man about three months, and the single-sided male spear, 32A, about two.

Pl. 32C is the forked throwing stick, *miluanta*, with which *Tjapara*, the moon-man injured *Purukupali*, and 32D, the plain throwing stick, *muruguna*. These are used in the *kulama* and *pukamuni* rituals, as well as for hunting and in personal quarrels.

[302] [413] Pl. 32E, G, are two interesting tools called *portas*, used for printing lines of dots on the bodies of the men and women. The colour is crushed to a thin paste, spread on a flat rock, and the *porta* rocked backward and forward in the paint to load the *porta*. The *porta* is then rocked on the body printing a line of dots.[96]

[515] [413] Pl. 32F is a curious ceremonial scratching stick used by the *Kilipaniati kulama* initiate to scratch himself during the period when he is not allowed to do so with his hands.

Pl. 32H, J, are two burial poles, *tudinis*, which were erected on the grave. These will be described in Section 10.

9. THE MESSAGE STICKS

202 765 Message sticks, under the general name of *purunkitas*, are used by the Tiwi for several purposes; personal requests to fellow tribesmen asking for presents or supplies (Fig. 51); invitations to other groups to perform ceremonies (Fig. 51, G, H), and in association with the *pukamuni* rituals.

When the ceremonial leader appointed the "workers" to cut the poles (p. 74), he also sent messengers carrying specially carved sticks (*purunkitas*) to each totemic group on Melville and Bathurst Islands, telling them when the final *pukamuni* rituals were about to start.

[301] [302] As each messenger neared his destination he painted himself entirely in white and donned his goose-feather ball, *tokwianga*, his chest ornaments,

[96] The lines of dots on *Wurarbui* (frontispiece) were made with a *porta*.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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[178] where they have not suffered from ecclesiastic prohibitions, are still using a similar form of grave and posts.

Major Campbell (1834, p. 158), writing of a grave he saw on Melville Island in 1826, states: "It (the grave) is surrounded by upright poles, many of which are formed at the top like lances and halberts, 14–15 feet high, and between these the spears and waddies (probably of the deceased) are stuck upright in the ground."

Brown (1905, p. 28) found a grave on Luxmore Head, in Apsley Straits surrounded . . . "by wooden slabs, portions of which had been burnt. Aboriginal markings were faintly discernible in places on the wood, some of the posts had the wood cut away from the outside toward the centre, leaving a short spike standing up in the middle of the post."

Klaatsch (1907, p. 257), in referring to the same burial poles at Luxmore Head, writes: "In some examples the slab was so carved that the upper part was only connected with the lower by two thin pillars or, on others, the top was mushroom-shaped.

"It is easy to see that the aborigines used fire for this work of sculpture, scratching the burnt part away with shell."

Basedow,[99] in 1911, came across a grave of an infant, on Bathurst Island, surrounded by five simply decorated posts, which had "been cut and carved with a sharp bladed instrument, in all probability a tomahawk."

Basedow persuaded the aborigines to renovate the designs, which did not vary greatly from those in use at the present day.

[114] Spencer,[100] in 1911, made sketches of many of the burial poles, and arranged for the aborigines to redecorate a group which was later displayed in the
[177] National Museum, Melbourne. He states (1928, p. 682) that: "It (the pole) was slowly and laboriously cut with an iron tomahawk, but formerly with a sharp shell, until it has the form decided upon by the artificer."

Dr. Kenneth Fry, who visited Melville Island in 1913, was the first investigator to ascertain the meanings of a number of poles. These, with his permission, are illustrated on Fig. 8. All of these shapes, but two, are those still most commonly used among the hundred or more which I saw on Melville Island.

[115] An old aboriginal, *Tjamalampua*, told me that in *palaneri* times, i.e., a long while ago, before there were any steel axes, the aborigines used stone axes to fell the hollow trees for *pukamuni* poles. Although there were just as many poles around the grave as there are today, they were neither as

[99] Basedow (1913), p. 314, Fig. 4, Pls. 13, 14, 16, 17, 18.
[100] Spencer (1928), p. 682, Figs. 471–7, Pl. X.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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recorded on the expedition, however, indicates that this may not be so, i.e.,

Forks or limbs of trees	26 per cent
Breasts of women	9 per cent
Rocks on sea-coast	18 per cent
Windows and doors (openings in poles)	15 per cent

That is, four shapes make up 68 per cent and the remaining eleven shapes, 32 per cent.

This would suggest that certain shapes have a traditional meaning, and that these shapes predominate. In fact, an examination of the accounts of the early travellers, Bremer, Campbell, Klaatsch, and Spencer, suggests that, except for those poles in the form of human figures, the *pukamuni* poles have not changed in shape to any extent during the last fifty years or more.

Description of the Burial Poles

(a) *The Pukamuni of Waniamperi*

The ten *mdinis* which the "workers" cut and painted for *Waniamperi's pukamuni* were looked upon as a family, a man, his two wives, and their children.

Pl. 32J, a middle-aged man, had two wives; Pl. 34E, a very fat, but young woman, and Pl. 35A, B, her much older sister.

The young wife, Pl. 34E, had three children; Pl. 36A, B, a small boy about ten, Pl. 36D, a girl of twelve, and Pl. 37D, a young married woman without a family.

The older wife, Pl. 35A, B, had four children; Pl. 36F, a boy of five, Pl. 36C, a girl about twelve, Pl. 32H, a young unmarried man, and Pl. 37D, an unmarried woman.

Plate 32J, eighteen feet in height, was by far the tallest pole in the group.

Because the actual shapes of the poles seldom had any relationship to the designs painted on them, the pole shapes and the painted designs will be described separately.

The pole shapes of Pl. 32J are: the projection, *c*, on the top, represents the branch of a tree, the bosses, *a*, *a*, *a*, are the breasts of women, the three cylindrical sections, *m*, *m*, *m*, large rocks on the sea-coast, and the narrow uprights, *n*, *n*, joining them, the limbs of eucalyptus trees.

In the painted designs, *a*, *a*, *a*, are, as before, the breasts of women, and the short vertical lines, *b*, *b*, etc., the teeth of a comb. The painted white projection, *c*, on the top of the pole, is a shovel-nosed shark; the crossed circles, *d*, *d*, are the noses of crocodiles, and the diagonal bands, *e*, *e*, *e*, the

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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532 765 [114] Dr. Kenneth Fry, when visiting the islands during 1913, made sketches of the pole shapes of eight *tudinis* and found out the meanings of five of them. These are reproduced on Fig. 8.

Fig. 8A represents a man carrying a roll of blankets on his back, *a*, being his hat, and *b*, his blankets. Fig. 8B also represents a man, *a*, as before, indicating his hat. On Fig. 8C, *a*, is the mast of a boat; on Fig. 8D, *a*, is the crutch in the boom of a pearling lugger (usually called branches of trees in the 1954 series); and on Fig. 8G, *a* is a window.

Dr. Fry did not find out the meanings of Fig. 8E, F, and H.

[177 797] The present-day meaning of design, Fig. 8F, which could have applied to Dr. Fry's example, is somewhat interesting. The aborigines at the Bathurst Island mission are warned of the terrors of their future life if they are not buried "under the cross", i.e., in the mission cemetery.

When I asked the aborigines at Melville Island what was the significance of the cross they had carved on the top of several of their *pukamuni* poles, they explained that it was there purely as a "safety measure", just in case there was something in the mission story.

11. THE CARVED AND PAINTED FIGURES

[171] It has been known, for about twenty years, that aboriginal craftsmen, in widely separated places in Northern Australia, but particularly in north-eastern Arnhem Land, have made carved and painted figures in wood.[10] It was a surprise, however, to find that the Tiwi people, who appear to have been separated from the mainland cultures for a considerable time, were using similar figures in their burial rituals.

Inquiries revealed that, for some years, one or another of the aboriginal craftsmen, skilled in the carving of *pukamuni* poles with steel tools, and, no doubt, experimenting with new shapes, occasionally made a burial pole in the form of a conventionalized human body (Pl. 39), or smaller human figures (Pls. 40, 41), which were placed on the grave.

I gathered information about three old human-headed burial poles as well as adding to the expedition collection, two recently made poles and six smaller figures.

At the burial, about thirty years ago, of the mother of one of my informants, a "worker", called *Kodo*, made and erected a human-headed burial pole. In 1941, Mr. W. E. Harney saw a well-carved head on a burial

[10] Mountford, 1956, p. 415, traces the distribution of the carved wooden figures in Northern Australia and their development at Yirrkalla, from simple human-headed burial posts of Malay origin to carved heads and full-length figures of considerable merit.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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pole at Punata on Apsley Straits (Fig. 1), while I saw and photographed the third example in the form of a highly conventionalized human figure (Pl. 38A, B, C), which was on an old grave not far from our camp. No doubt there are other examples of these poles on the deserted graves of the Islands. I saw recently, in the Musée Ethnographique et Musée Suisse de Folklore, Bâle, Switzerland, two full-length human figures which had been collected at Bathurst Island by Mr. Karel Kupta in 1956.

This evidence indicates that, for thirty years, at least, the men and women of the Tiwi,[11] occasionally carved burial poles in human form; we do not know when the practice of carving the smaller figures[12] began.

At first sight it appeared that these wooden figures might have been a cultural trait borrowed, as in north-eastern Arnhem Land, from the Malay trepangers. Further research, however, did not confirm this hypothesis.

Although now and again some Malay prau, driven off its course by contrary winds, must have touched the shores of either Melville or Bathurst Island, it is certain that the men of the Tiwi, who were notably unfriendly, would have endeavoured to drive them away. This unfriendliness probably explains why the Malays were not able to establish themselves on these Islands as they did in north-eastern Arnhem Land. The old men of the Tiwi do not remember any Malay fishermen visiting their country. This evidence that the Malays did not settle on the land of the Tiwi is further supported by Campbell (1834), who writes (p. 143), "The Malays were never seen near Melville Island", and later (p. 155), ". . . Malay fishermen were forbidden to go near Melville Island . . . alleging that it was infested with pirates. . . ."

This evidence suggests that the Tiwi practice of carving human figures in wood was not, like that of the aborigines of Arnhem Land, borrowed from a Malayan source, but is a recent local development, probably stimulated by the acquisition of steel tools and the other possessions of the white man. For instance, it would be easy to imagine a skilled aboriginal trying to make his pole resemble the tall bodies of the white man's saints in the mission church. From these larger would develop the smaller figures.

It is unlikely that any elaborately carved burial pole, much less one in the form of a human figure, would be more than fifty years old. Before that time, except those stolen from the short-lived Fort Dundas settlement, the Tiwi would have owned few, if any steel tools.

Although the Tiwi have no specific myth about the larger burial poles,

[11] A woman may cut a burial pole instead of her husband, should he be absent.

[12] There is a difference, however, between the two; the *tudini* poles, in human form, are cut from the hardest and most durable eucalypt; the smaller figures from the soft wood of the beach kapok, a wood which is quickly destroyed by insects.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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CHAPTER IV

The Kulama Ceremony

114 881 ALTHOUGH little has been recorded about the colourful *pukamani* burial rituals of the Tiwi, several investigators have published details of the *kulama* ceremony.

Spencer saw a *kulama* ceremony during March 1912. His records of those rituals (Spencer, 1928, pp. 658–76), the most complete we have, show that, [179] during the last forty years the pattern has not changed to any extent. Although the names of the initiation grades given by Spencer do not agree with those recorded by later investigators, it is likely these differences are due to Spencer's interpreter, the buffalo shooter, Joe Cooper, who was not then fully conversant with the ceremony.

Fry (1949, p. 176), during 1913, witnessed an initiation ceremony in which Reuben Cooper, Joe Cooper's half-caste son, passed from the *Kollo-poniati* (my *Kilipaniati*) stage to that of a *Wadjeniati*.

In the same year Fry (1950, pp. 79–80), saw the closing phases of the *kulama* from the peeling of the yam (p. 138), to the final rituals (p. 142). Although Fry was mistaken in considering that this ceremony was part of a burial rite, his record is a valuable and accurate description of the last two days of the *kulama*.

Hart (1930, p. 286), recorded the *kulama* initiation names and the duration of the grades of both male and female initiates. These names correspond closely to those I was able to obtain from the fully initiated men, with one exception. Hart stated that the grade of *Mikingula*, i.e., the fully initiated, lasted for four years. This is obviously incorrect, as the *Mikingula*, being the final grade, lasts for life.

178 881 It appears certain that Tiwi initiation has ceased, although, I feel sure, within comparatively recent times. The *Mikingulas* often talked about initiating some of their companions, but when the opportunity came, they procrastinated.

115 881 However, the same fully initiated men gave me full details of the rituals at each stage of initiation, explained how those rituals fitted into the *kulama* rituals we had witnessed, and either decorated themselves, or painted designs

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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Grades of Kulama initiates		Period of initiation
Mikinatrina Mikinarrininga	Male Female	2 years
Mikintara Mikintaringa	Male Female	From one kulama until the next
Mikiatarima Mikiatarimiriga	Male Female	From one kulama until the next
Mikingula Mikingulinga	Male Female	Fully initiated for life

2. THE PRELIMINARY RITUALS OF THE KULAMA

881 (1) *The Capture of the Marukumuni Initiate*

According to my informants, any tribesman chosen for initiation, must be a mature man, usually married and with children. In fact, all the men pointed out to me as being suitable candidates were thirty years of age or older.[18]

The first time there is a gathering of people after a *kulama* ceremony, such as at a burial, or an *ilania*,[19] the fully initiated *kulama* men, the *Mikingulas*, ask the permission of the leader of the *kulama*, the *Naripikilitipi*, to capture any man or woman, who is suitable for the first stage of initiation, that of the *Marukumuni*.[20] In preparation for this, the *Mikingulas* have already mixed a quantity of yellow ochre.

At a given signal, one of the *Mikingulas*, who has been standing unobtrusively near, suddenly throws his arms around the chosen initiate. The captive struggles to release himself, protesting against being initiated into the *kulama*. But a number of the *Mikingulas* rush to their companion's aid, lay
[302] [301] the struggling initiate on the ground, paint a design, in yellow, on his upper arms and body (Pl. 42A), and put the red tail feathers of a black cockatoo in his hair. Meanwhile, other initiated men are walking around the group

[178] [114] [18] The age of initiation has been raised since Spencer and Fry saw the *kulama* in the early days of the century. Spencer (1928, p. 664) refers to young boys, while Reuben Cooper, whom I knew in 1920 as a young man about twenty, would have only been about thirteen years of age when Fry saw him as a *Kilipaniati*.

[19] A preliminary ceremony for the burial rituals.

[20] I do not know who captures the female initiate, the *Marukumuninga*.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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Dry sticks, about three feet in length, were pushed upright into the ground around the *tumarapi* (oven), kindling wood was laid between them, other pieces of dried wood piled cross-wise between the uprights until there was a stack about three feet high (Pl. 45A). 881 [372]

(5) *Placing the Uncooked Yams in Water*

About sunset, the *kulama* men went to the bloodwood tree, the *wuringalua*, where the *Mikinarinas* had stored the yams in the morning and, on pulling bushes away, revealed some of the male and female *Marukumuni* initiates squatting, holding in their arms a basket of the uncooked *kulama* yams. The *Marukumuni* initiates took the yams to the water, everyone assisting in laying them on a pad of grass in the bed of the stream (Pl. 46B).

Immediately this task was completed, the *kulama* men pushed the *Marukumuni* initiates over,[80] and, holding them by the legs and arms dragged them backward and forward through the now muddy water to wash off their body paint. They were then taken back to camp, seated beside the *milimika* and painted with a different pattern (Pl. 42F). Neither the *Marukumuni* nor the *Wafjaniati* initiates took any further part in the rituals of that day. When, after dark, the *kulama* men entered the *milimika* to chant another series of songs, the camp fires were allowed to burn brightly, because the aborigines said that the yams, being in the water, were now "quiet" so that there was no fear of *taini*, the spirit of *kulama* sickness. [302]

The chanting men walked counter-clockwise around the *milimika* because *Purujiktini* did so at the first *kulama*. To have walked in the opposite direction, even then, would have made the spirit of the *kulama* yam angry. 881

The following are literal translations of a selection of the songs. 533

(*a*) "I had a quarrel with Tom Crow, the Superintendent of Snake Bay Settlement." 539 [177]

(*b*) "My mother-in-law is good to me, she did not take away my promised wife."

(*c*) "The fruit of the *binanis* (*Eugenia* sp.) ripens and falls to the ground."

(*d*) "The little *Pitipitnis* (spirit children) are dancing on the beach."

[80] Spencer, 1928, p. 664, describing a similar ritual, states, "Several old men seized the *Wapinyeri* (my *Wafjaniati*), and plunged into the water with him. As many as could get near him gripped him by the legs and arms, and yelling, splashing and churning up the mud, . . . dragged him backward and forward several times, . . . As soon as the *Wapinyeri* were released, the men turned their attention to the *Marukumuni* boys. . . ." Although my informants did not say so it is likely that the *Wafjaniati* initiates were also pushed into the water to remove their body paint in readiness for the second design of a *Milimarina* (Pl. 42J). [114]

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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blood from the arm of the victim, yet leaves no wound. As the sick person becomes weaker, the *Papinjuwari*, making himself sufficiently small, enters the body through the mouth, and, by drinking up the rest of the blood, kills the victim.

FIG. 12. *The Spirit People*
The Meteor-man, Papinjuwari.

On his return to Wangidji, the meteor-man vomits the stolen blood into a bark container. This provides a drink for the assembled *Papinjuwaris*.

The aborigines stated that, as the Tiwi have no medicine men, they are without protection against these dangerous spirit people.[42]

Pl. 47c is a simple bark painting of the *Papinjuwaris*. The white figures are the ghoulish sky-people, the crescents are moons, and the circles, stars.

Fig. 12 is the copy of a crayon drawing showing a *Papinjuwari*, *a*, inside of his paper-bark hut at Wangidji. On either side of him at *b*, *b*, are the large

[42] Spencer, 1928, p. 671, refers to a song chanted in a *Kulama* ceremony which is supposed to protect the initiates from an evil spirit, the shooting star, *Mulimuu* (almost certain to be my *Papinjuwari*); Harney and Elkin, 1942, p. 282, who call the meteor man, Papinowari, or Lamparapari, state that, if a piece of dried blood of a person is burnt, the smell will attract the meteor-man.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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CONCLUSION

105 171 THIS study of the Tiwi tribe of Melville and Bathurst Islands, made through the medium of their art, their myths, and their ceremonies, reveals wide differences between many phases of their cultural life and that of the aborigines who live on the adjacent mainland. These differences are probably the result of isolation caused by the dangerous tideways which have separated the two peoples from each other for an unknown, but probably lengthy, period.

[174] Though both are of aboriginal stock, and from the same cultural background (as indicated by basically similar creation stories), this isolation has allowed the two groups to develop independently. It may well be that the beliefs of the Tiwi represent those of one of the aboriginal migrations to Australia, and has remained somewhat constant, while the mainland people, enriched by occasional waves of new ideas, have developed a much more varied philosophical and cultural life.

The main differences between the two cultures can be summarized as follows:

171 x 532 (a) The art forms of the Melville and Bathurst Islands are so highly formalized that they seldom resemble the objects they represent. In contrast, the art of their neighbours on the mainland, the Arnhem Land aborigines, is not only entirely representational, but is probably a more vital and colourful art than exists in any other part of the continent.

171 765 (b) Compared with the rest of Australia, too, the ceremonies of the Tiwi are particularly limited, there being only two in the whole culture. The major ceremony, that of burial, is by far the more elaborate. It extends over several months, involves the co-operation of many people, and provides the tribe with a complete outlet for their grief, their music, their dancing, and their art. This ceremony is without parallel in Australia, and, so far as we know, elsewhere in the world.

171 881 The other ceremony, the Kulama, is a blending of several rituals: the initiation of men and women into the social grades of the tribe; the ceremony of preparing a poisonous yam for food,[88] which ceremony the participants believe prolongs the wet season; and the airing of grievances

[114] [88] Spencer, 1928, p. 661, speaks of the Kulama as a food increase ritual. It is probable that Spencer was only expressing an opinion, having previously carried out research in Central Australia where increase rituals are both numerous and important. I did not obtain any evidence which indicated that food increase rituals were carried out by the Tiwi.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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411 412 (f) The aborigines of Melville and Bathurst Islands have a particularly limited material culture. They have only double-ended, or simple wooden barbed spears, which they throw by hand as one would throw a javelin. This form of propulsion contrasts strongly with the mainland, where the use of the spear-thrower is universal. Nor do the Tiwi use any small mounted stone tools. Before the advent of steel, their only cutting tool was a cockle-shell, held in the hand. It is likely that until about fifty years ago, until Joe [177] Cooper brought the mainland aborigines, with their polished stone axes, to Melville Island, the Tiwi possessed only a crudely flaked stone axe, mounted in a length of split wood with the gum of a eucalyptus tree. In addition, all of [415] the Tiwi carrying utensils are made of bark, because the Islanders lack the [285] knowledge of any form of basketry or of the netting techniques.

It is evident, then, that within the range of the research I was able to 105 undertake, there are many differences between the culture of the Tiwi and 171 that of the aborigines of the nearby mainland. There is little doubt that Miss Goodale's research, when published, will reveal further dissimilarities.[66]

My research, however, must be considered only as a preliminary study, 123 within the limits of the subjects enumerated. Lack of transport prevented me from visiting any of the totemic sites, and limited time from investigating more fully other aspects of their beliefs.

It is my sincere hope that this study will be continued by another ethnologist before civilization has distorted or destroyed the interesting cultural life of the Tiwi.

[66] Since the writing of this book, Chaseling has referred (1957, p. 170) to a female ancestor (unnamed) who created much of the mainland side of Dundas Strait. This information would suggest that Melville Island and the adjacent mainland are more closely linked mythologically, and perhaps culturally, than the evidence in this book suggests. Further research on this subject will be awaited with interest.

3: Hart E-5 (1928-1929) 1930 OI20 Tiwi OI20

101 Like other concrete things in this culture, the hordes have a multi-
621 plicity of names, and this has caused a certain amount of confusion and doubt as to their actual number. A full list of these names is as follows. The name most commonly used in each case by the natives themselves is given first in each case, as these are the names used throughout this account of the Tiwi culture.

1. *Tiklauila*: *Arupula, Matjulauila, Mulinyabila, Tuyalimbila, Taipauila, Pilamiruntabila, Aritui, Wayipui, Adauinabila, Payondiyaluwila, Pukuyinabila, Primanduwila.*
2. *Wranyuila*: *Mungwaiunabila, Puianaruwila, Tintauwila.*
3. *Minyuila*: *Wonuruwila, Kalipraniyuwila, Malamikwariunabila.*
4. *Malauila*: *Mirkalambila, Pulunduwila, Iwiriwila, Malamuyoriunabila, Papiunabila.*
5. *Wilranyuila*: *Panodjiwila, Mirkawiunabila, Marawauila, Kambuyambila.*
6. *Mumupula*: *Urumaiawila, Tununabila, Imaluwila, Parumunupula.*
7. *Turupula*: *Yunanduwila, Tikampula.*
8. *Yeimpi*: *Arupontuwila, Arangitarila, Palwiunabila.*
9. *Mandiimbula*: *Tumulambila, Tilambila, Urumaiunabila, Uruwinapila, Ilubiunabila.*

101 If Spencer's list[1] is compared with mine it will be seen that allowing
● 114 for our different spellings, his "Kambuambulla" are really the *Marawauila*,
621 his "Cherupulla" are the *Turupula*, his "Purumunupulla" are really the *Mumupula*, his "Mindaluulla" probably mean the *Minyuila*. "Ulobu" (or *Ilubi*) is a place-name of a favourite camping ground in the country of the Mandiimbula slightly to the north-west of Cape Gambier; hence *Ilubiunabila*. "Marungallambu" similarly is a camping ground in the territory of the *Malauila*. "Barranpunalli" I am unable to trace; *Punali* (or *Bunali*) is, however, the name for the district around the English Point Alley. "Arangijerulla" is an alternative name for the *Yeimpi*, but I prefer to spell it *Arangitarila*, while "Balauiungambulla" is obviously a misspelling of the *Palwiunabila*, which is another alternative name for the *Yeimpi*.

121 To explain this multiplicity of horde names, and also to throw some light on the actual composition of the horde, I propose to consider one of the hordes in detail, taking for this purpose the *Tiklauila*.

[1] Spencer, *Native Tribes of the Northern Territory*, 1914, page 45.

3: Hart E-5 (1928-1929) 1930 OI20 Tiwi OI20

period is the prelude to the complete lapsing of the title to the district. The prominent part played in this institution by the father's father and the fact that most of the present districts held on such a title are held from the father's father whereas comparatively few are held through an ancestor (necessarily more remote) who has been forgotten, seems to indicate that *yirt' amini* holdings do not last more than three generations before they lapse for want of sufficient able-bodied men to enforce them.

It must not be imagined that the whole of Melville and Bathurst Islands are divided into such holdings nor indeed that everyone in the tribe belongs to such a group. The main obstacle to this lies in the self-evident fact that if one's father's father dies in the territory of another horde, as must have quite frequently have happened in the days of marauding expeditions between hordes, there can be no such thing as a *yirt' amini* holding of the district wherein he died. Moreover there are numbers of the Tiwi whose fathers and grandfathers died young, and the essence of the system is that the grandfather should have been old enough to have sufficient male children and grandchildren to enforce the claim.

It can easily be seen from the above how it comes about that each horde has a number of names, since each one of the *yirt' amini* group-names is liable to be applied to the whole horde merely by adding *-ila* or *-ula* to the name of the district they control.

Spencer's list of horde names is at variance with mine, because he did not realize this. Out of six men of the *Tiklauwila*, one might easily get six different answers to his question as to their "country," each giving the name of his *yirt' amini* group. It is quite possible that the horde names that are used here—*Tiklauwila*, *Munupula*, etc.—are really *yirt' amini* names that have become extended to include a whole horde either by the identification of a very powerful *yirt' amini* group with a horde in the eyes of the rest of the tribe or by the former horde name becoming tabu and a *yirt' amini* name being substituted. This view is strengthened by the fact that in one or two of the hordes, the horde name is still in use as the name of a district. Thus whereas the whole of the territory of the *Wilraŋgwila* on the north of Melville is technically *Wilraŋgu*, the native name for Karslake Island, a small portion of that territory, is *Wilraŋgu*. Similarly *Malau* is a creek in the territory of the *Malauila* horde.

A man is born into the horde of his father. Should his father die and his mother be taken by a member of another horde he goes with her, and WHILE THE WOMAN WILL ALWAYS BE LOOKED UPON AS BELONGING TO HER FORMER HORDE, THE CHILD CHANGES HIS, TAKING THAT OF HIS STEPFATHER.

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Phratry 1 (*continued*) Clan Name	Totems
(c) *Mandubani, Mandubuka, Mandubowi*	fly
(d) *Udungini, Udunga, Udungi*	crocodile
(e) *Milubruinila, Milubrukela, Milubruwila*	cockatoo
(f) *Mierdi, Mierdina, Mierdui*	pandanus
(g) *Tanikini, Taninka, Tanikui*	flying fox
(h) *Mutuninila, Mutungula, Mutunibila*	a fish
(i) *Timilani, Timiluka, Timilowi*	sand fly
Phratry 2.	
(a) *Timiriringini, Timiriringa, Timiriringui*	woolly-butt tree
(b) *Yarinabila, Yarinabunela, Yarinabila*	red paint, sugar bag, (wild honey)
(c) *Orandjani, Orandjuka, Orandjowi*	stingray
(d) *Paroliunginila, Paroliunggula, Paroliungibila*	mud
(e) *Iliti, Ilitina, Ilitui*	*malikini* (a wild fruit)
(f) *Andjulini, Andjuluna, Andjului*	rain, turtle
Phratry 3.	
(a) *Tokwombini, Tokwombuya, Tokwombui*	a bird
(b) *Aringguinila, Aringguinela, Aringguwila*	stones
(c) *Pinaluwinila, Pinaluwinela, Pinaluwila*	wood
(d) *Walikuinila, Walikuinela, Walikuwila*	stars
(e) *Wirnigiti, Wirnigitiya, Wirnigitui*	bloodwood, *mipari* and a kind of fish.
(f) *Taparini, Taparina, Taparui*	moon
(g) *Djabijabini, Djabijabuna, Djabijabui*	march fly.

In reference to the list it must be pointed out that among the Tiwi there are two languages; one is used in common everyday conversation, and the other is a sacred language used on ceremonial occasions, in ritual songs and formulae. Most of the clan-names of the above list are words belonging not to the ordinary language but to the esoteric language. Such words would never be used in ordinary conversation *except as totemic names*. A bloodwood tree in ordinary speech is *urnalaka*, the wild plum is *malikini*, rain is *paketirina*, the cockatoo is *ingaga*, trees are *tuka* and so on. Of the twenty-two clans nine are normally called by a word in use in the ordinary language; the other thirteen have names taken from the sacred language.

Sir Baldwin Spencer apparently failed to distinguish between the

3: Hart E-5 (1928-1929) 1930 OI20 Tiwi OI20

sacred and the ordinary language, with the result that his list of Tiwi clans and their totems is confused and inaccurate.[4]

The Tiwi do not seem to associate very closely the totemic clan and the object that is the totem of the clan. For instance a man of the *Udunui* considers himself as *Udunini*, not as a crocodile, which he normally thinks of as *irungrabai*. The bond of solidarity is between one member of the clan and another rather than between a member of the clan and his totem.

So much is this the case that it is occasionally difficult to ascertain what is the natural object which gives the clan its name, *i.e.*, what is the totem of the clan. The *Ariŋgwila* are a case in point. In order to find what natural object was the emblem of this clan recourse had to be had to a few old men of the clan who were apparently the only people in the tribe who knew what natural object was the emblem of the *Ariŋgwila*. Everyone knew that a number of men, women and children were *Ariŋgwila*, thought of them and referred to them as *Ariŋgwila*, but very few members of the community connected them in any way with stones—" any kind of stones"—which according to these old men, are the *Ariŋgwila* totemic emblem.

With regard to the origin of the totemic clans and their names the natives say that the system of *puknì* was instituted by the old men a very long time ago. One old man said at some time in the distant past " *Udunui nia puknì kapi Primandua*—Udunui is my totem at Primandua," and so everyone knew his totem was *udunui*. Knowing their legends everyone knew the connection between *Udunui* and *Primandua* since it is at this place, a district in Bathurst Island, that *Munututni*, the father of all crocodiles, still has his home. Another old man decided upon *mandubani* as his *puknì* because his favourite camping ground was at *Pripanyimili* which has a mythological association with *mandubuka* (the sand fly), such association being founded no doubt on the fact that sand flies breed in great numbers in the mangrove swamps of that region.

The *Ariŋgwila* (the stone totem) are closely associated with a famous rock in *Miŋgu* called *Wurukwompi* which, due no doubt to a hollow interior, gives forth a roll like thunder when beaten with a stick and hence is a sacred object to the natives. The former home of the *Ariŋgwila* is in the

[4] Spencer, *Native Tribes of the Northern Territory*, page 200.

4: Hart E-5 (1928-1929) 1930 OI20 Tiwi OI20

strictly descriptive rather than terms of address, yet quite frequently they are used in both ways. They refer to the state of life the person has reached and are often used as substitute names during the period in which an individual is nameless on account of his name being tabu. Names such as baby, young man, etc., are of course found in every language; it is their occasional use as terms of address that makes them interesting among the Tiwi, and also the fact that Spencer has confused them with the initiation-grade names. These names are:—

Age-Grade Names (Male).

Male baby	(Birth to about 11)	*Kiritini*
Boy approaching puberty	(12-14)	*Mala-kuniya*
Uninitiated boy or young man		*Tatiy-ati*
Young man during initiation	(Initiation Grade Term)	
Initiated man		*Mikingula*
Old man	(over 60)	*Irula or Palini*

Age-Grade Names (Female).

Female baby	(Birth to about 6)	*Kiritiya*
Girl approaching puberty	(7 to 11)	*Aliiya*
Girl beginning to menstruate	(12-14)	*Muru-kibura*
Girl at first pregnancy		*Miriyaladja*
Shortly before birth of child		*Poporganti*
Mother of male child		*Ari-aui*
Mother of female child		*Pirnambili*
Mother of several children		*Nurau-rika*
Old women with children		*Pirimariya*
Barren woman		*Timiriya*

If these two lists are compared with Spencer,[4] it will be found that all the names which he gives as "status terms" are included in one or other of my two lists with the exception of "Gunmurdi" which Spencer gives as "very old man," and which I was quite unable to trace at all. I have adopted the division into age-grade names and initiation-grade names and rejected "status terms" altogether as the two groups of names are quite distinct, one depending on age, the other on advancement in initiation.

[4] *Native Tribes of Northern Australia*, 1914, p. 84.

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197 continued all the while, is at this stage strengthened. Any of these acts may be
527 interrupted at any moment by changing to the "hauling of sail or anchor" scene
535 and many interjections of "poop" and "iah" accompany them. The performer himself now ceases to stamp with his feet, but in place thereof he bends his legs at the knees and knocks his thighs together while he extends his arms outwards, either in front or at the side of him.

527 *Corrobboree of a fight.*—During several of the corrobborees described, a chant
535 was heard which accompanied the acting in addition to the clapping of hands against the thighs or buttocks. In trying to reproduce the words or syllables of this chant, the nearest analogy I can find is—

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"*Tupera monan la jerra*
Tupera monan la jerra,"

and

"*Tupatunan tenakomejona.*"

These chants are muttered uninterruptedly throughout the particular part. The corrobboree of a fight consists in the imitation of a spear duel between two angry blackfellows. They carry the same kind of reed-spears as was described under the "kangaroo ceremony." They first place themselves in defiance of one another at either side of the half-circle and go through all sorts of antics, brandishing their spears, rolling their eyes, and furiously throwing their bodies about. Next they start running about the ring and stamp their feet, throwing up their arms and knocking their thighs together in much the same way as previously described.

Corrobboree of the jungle fowl.—After the usual excessive amount of shouting, jabbering, and excited shrieks of laughter, an old man runs forward into the ring. He bends his arms at the elbow and holds them close against the sides of his body, while the closed fists rest on his chest, an attitude resembling that of a professional runner. This is to resemble the wings of the bird (*Leipoa*). He looks about the ground from side to side as though in search of something. Presently he imitates the bird's call with a shrill penetrating voice which sounds like "he-r-r-r-l." The onlookers' accompaniment consists in producing short spluttering and bubbling noises with their lips that sound like "brrl, brrl, brrl." The performer often interrupts the proceedings by shouting "he," to which all others respond with a loud "yeh." Now he throws up clouds of dust behind him with his feet, in imitation of the way in which the jungle fowl scratch and throw up the earth into the enormous mounds that contain their eggs.

To conclude the ceremony, all performers are led off again by the original leader in Indian file and go through much the same performance as they did in the initiation of the ceremony; the final shouts and shrieks, after the completion of the "trot" in spiral line, being particularly loud and enthusiastic.

114 Captain King[1] was probably the first white man to have witnessed the
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[1] *Survey Intertropical Coasts of Australia*, 1837, vol. i, p. 114.

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 O120 Tiwi O120

corrobboree of the Melville Islanders, but it appears that he regarded the [114] demonstration as hostile. He writes that "the dance consisted chiefly of the per- 527 formers leaping two or three times successively out of the sea, and then violently 535 moving their legs so as to agitate the water into a foam for some distance around them, all the time shouting loudly and laughing immoderately; then they would run through the water for eight or ten yards and perform again; and this was repeated over and over as long as the dance lasted."

During none of these ceremonies, or indeed anywhere on the island, did I see [771] anything of totemism in the scientific sense of the word. This fact is in accordance [114] with my observations in Central and North Australia, and my negative evidence is amply borne out by the researches of Drs. W. E. Roth and H. Klaatsch and others.

Pastimes.

The sham-fights of youths with small arrow-shaped spears have already been 524 mentioned. Children were observed upon the beach competing in running and long jump. A favourite amusement of the younger folk on a breezy day is to collect the light globular seed-heads of the "spring rolling grass" (*Spinifex hirsutis*), that grow on every sand-hill near the coast, and take them to the beach and there release them on the hardened sand. Driven along by the wind, these seeds travel over the surface at no mean pace. Allowing them to gain a fair start, the children bolt after them and endeavour to overtake them and pick them up from the ground while dashing past them at full speed in "cow-boy" fashion.

Another game is that of hand-ball. The seeds of the zamia (*Cycas media*) take the place of a small ball. Two lads stand facing one another and hit the seed to and fro with the palms of their hands, after the style of a modern game of tennis.

Despite their keenness of sight and quickness of hand, they are, nevertheless, [147] very backward in catching with their hands an object which is thrown at them.

Burial Method.

The aborigines of Bathurst and Melville Islands have a unique and elaborate 764 method of burial; graves have been found on both islands. It appears that the favourite places for burying the dead are there, where a jungle or mangrove-thicket breaks to the ordinary eucalypt-woodland, usually near to the sea-coast or to a native water.

Historically we have to note several observations in this connection.

Sir Gordon Bremer[1] mentions having discovered a grave on Bathurst Island in 1824. "The situation was one of such perfect retirement and repose that it

[1] *Imperial Parliamentary Paper*, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, London, March 27th, 1843; also in *The Genesis of Queensland*, by H. S. Russell, Sydney, 1888, p. 24.

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20

764 displayed considerable feeling in the survivors who placed it there, and the simple order which pervaded the spot would not have disgraced a civilized people. It was an oblong square open at the foot, the remaining end and sides being railed round with trees of 7 feet or 8 feet high, some of which were carved with a stone or shell, and further ornamented by rings of wood, also carved. On the tops of these posts were placed the waddies of the deceased. . . . At the head was placed a piece of a canoe and a spear, and round the grave were several little baskets made of the fan-palm leaf, which, from their small size, we thought had been placed there by the children of the departed. Nothing could exceed the neatness of the whole; the sand and the earth were cleared away from the sides, and not a shrub or weed was suffered to grow within the area."

Major Campbell,[1] who in 1826 relieved Captain Barlow as commandant of Fort Dundas, in his interesting memoir to the Royal Geographical Society also refers to native graves observed by him. He writes: "It appears to be the custom of the natives to bury their dead, their burial places being in retired spots near their most frequented encamping ground. The burial place is circular, probably 10 or 12 feet in diameter; it is surrounded by upright poles, many of which are formed at the top like lances and halberds, 14 or 15 feet high; and between these the spear and waddies (probably of the deceased) are stuck upright in the ground." This description applies equally well to those seen by us, with the exception that the cleared circular space was considerably larger in our case, while the height of the posts, above the ground, was less. [114]

171 764 In 1847, Bete Jukes,[2] naturalist to the expedition of H.M.S. "*Fly*," described and figured a native tomb seen at Port Lihou in Endeavour Strait; "Round a central mound of sand there had been a broad ditch or hollow scooped out and swept quite clean for several yards in width. The mound was of a quadrangular form, 8 feet long, 4 feet wide, and 3 feet high. A stout post stood upright at each corner, and the sides were ornamented by rows of the ribs of the dugong placed regularly along them. . . . On each post was either a large shell or the skull of a dugong, and on the grave were several other dugongs' skulls and shells of the *Nautilus pompilius*. All these, as well as the posts, were smeared with red ochre." Additional interest is attached to the description of Jukes, since he states that "between the two posts, near the sea, a long stick had been inserted, ornamented with feathers and streamers of grass, and fastened to the post by other cross-sticks similarly ornamented." From this wording, and more so from the figure reproduced by him, it would seem that the decoration between the posts was one of those sacred ornaments to which I have elsewhere referred as the *wannaingi*.[3] [778 114]

[1] *Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc.*, London, 1834, vol. iv, p. 158.

[2] *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage H.M.S.* "*Fly*," vol. i, pp. 149 and 150 (1847).

[3] *Vide* also George French Angas, *S. Australia*, illustrated, 1847, Plate XXIV; Edge Partington, Album III, Plate CXIV; Spencer and Gillen: *Native Tribes Cent. Australia*, pp. 230 and 231; W. E. Roth, *Ethnological Studies, Queensland Aborigines*, Fig. 437;

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20

764 Territory in 1905, Messrs. Brown and Gee[1] found, near Luxmore Head on Melville Island, "a grave enclosed by wooden slabs, portions of which had been burnt. Aboriginal markings were faintly discernible in places on the wood, and some of the posts had the wood cut away at the top, leaving two spike-like horns at the sides; others had the wood cut away from the outside towards the centre, leaving a short spike standing up in the middle of the post."

As I was examining the Rivers' country on the mainland at the time, I did not personally see the find.

Soon after Professor H. Klaatsch, when visiting Melville Island, discovered close to the site of the old naval settlement of Fort Dundas a "grave decorated by monuments." Professor Klaatsch[2] describes the find as follows: "The grave was surrounded by nine wooden pillars, arranged in an elongated oval, each post differing in size and shape from its fellow. The longest was about 6 feet, and each was variously painted in yellows and reds."

●114 764 Bremer, Campbell, and Klaatsch found implements and weapons, presumably the belongings of the deceased, lying upon the grave or the grave-posts or stuck upright into the ground. They mention spears, waddies, bark water-vessels and baskets of fan-palm leaves.[3] No relics of this kind were noticed by me; in explanation thereof I state that such are likely to be destroyed by the numerous bush-fires occurring on the island, and secondly, in the case presently to be described, on account of the immature age of the individual, since children rarely are in possession of any belongings. I have, however, recorded[4] a similar custom from Central Australia.

764 The discovery I am now about to describe was made in the south-eastern corner of Bathurst Island. The grave was situated not far from the coast and on the edge of a eucalypt forest, adjoining a thicket of mangroves (*vide* Plate XIII, Figs. 1 and 2). The space was cleared; a circular patch of ground, 8 metres in diameter, had been artificially elevated by a few centimetres and swept clean.[5] It was bestrewn with numerous burnt fragments of shells of the edible *Telescopium fuscum* and *Cyrena cuningtonensis*, and also with ashes. In the centre of the elevated patch was a small elongated oval mound, which indicated where the corpse had been buried. The direction of its longer axis was north-west by south-east. Five ornamented posts[6] surrounded the small mound in an irregular way;

[1] *Vide Report on Explorations by Govt. Geologist and Staff*, 1906, p. 28, and *Proc. Austr. Assoc. Adv. Science*, vol. xi, 1907, p. 546.

[2] *Proc. Austr. Assoc. Adv. Science*, vol. xi, 1907, pp. 586-8, and *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, vol. xxxix, 1907, pp. 678 *et seq.*, Plate IX.

[3] *Cf.* H. Basedow, *Proc. Roy. Soc. S. Australia*, vol. xxi, 1907, p. 38, Figs. 40 and 41.

[4] *Vide Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Australia*, vol. xxviii, 1904, p. 24, Plate VI, Fig. 1.

[5] Whether this was done to guard the grave-posts against bush fires or to facilitate the detection of an imaginary visit of the evil spirit ("devil devil"), as is the case in Central Australia, or both, is still unsettled.

[6] Another grave, situated not far from the one under consideration, was surrounded by the remnants of nine posts.

6: Hart E-5 (1928-1930) 1954 O120 Tiwi O120

The southern section of Bathurst

Island (Hart 1930) is inhabited by a subtribe called the Tiklauila. In 1911 a Roman Catholic Mission station was established at the southeast tip of Bathurst Island, virtually in Tiklauila territory, and at the time of the present writer's field work this was the only white settlement. In the generation before the missionaries arrived the "big man" among the Tiklauila was Turimpi. Because of their complicated marriage and inheritance regulations the average Tiwi old man in the course of his lifetime accumulates an impressive number of wives and Turimpi was no exception to this rule. At the time of his death, which occurred toward the end of the 1890's at an age which was probably something approaching 70, Turimpi counted as his wives then living or pre-deceasing him no less than 25 females. Of these the only one we need to pay any attention to is the woman named Bongdadu. She, while Turimpi's wife, had borne numerous children, of whom three males grew to manhood—Antonio, born in approximately 1883, Mariano born three or four years later, and Louis born around 1893. Sometime between 1895 and 1900 she was widowed by the death of Turimpi, whereupon she married another elderly man, Murikambunga, to whom she bore two more sons—Tipperary, born around 1900, and Bob born about a year later. Bongdadu of course had numerous other children who did not survive childhood.[3] It is her five adult sons who concern us here.

Turimpi, as the number of wives suggests, was an important tribal figure during his lifetime. Importance, prestige, tendency to be spoken of as a "big man" are in Tiwi functions of a number of factors in which age, number of wives, fighting ability, wisdom in council, and "family" in the sense of having relatives who are also "big men," are all compounded. On all these counts Turimpi was important, and his prestige tended to carry on after his death. Since the horde or subtribe is a comparatively small group, ranging in size from 214 for the Tiklauila (the biggest) to 57 for the Mingwila (the smallest), there will seldom be more than two or three "big men" in a subtribe at the same time, and at certain periods there may be none at all since the few old men who have the age qualification may not have the other qualifications. Turimpi's death left the Tiklauila to some extent in this state. There were few other men with comparable seniority and none of them had the qualifications for informal leadership and local prestige that he had possessed. His death left a gap, and a gap that could hardly be filled by his eldest son Antonio, who at the time of his father's death was a youth of about 16 years of age. About thirty years later, in 1928 to 1930, the field work upon which the present paper is based was carried out.

ANTONIO

It so happened that the present writer had been with the Tiwi for nearly three months before he met Antonio, although during those three months he had been closely associated with two of his brothers, Mariano and Tipperary. These two gave Antonio a great build-up as one of the most important men around, as a "big man" in every possible Tiwi sense. But when encountered in person he proved most disappointing. The only words that fitted Antonio

6: Hart E-5 (1928-1930) 1954 OI20 Tiwi OI20

leads to the situation—quite foreign to our way of thought and also apparently to that of Polynesian cultures—whereby a young bachelor can prowl around the bush all night without arousing the slightest interest but his daytime wanderings, ostensibly in search of game, are watched by his married seniors with the deepest suspicion.

[8] The buffalo, which are confined to Melville Island, are the wild descendants of domestic East Asian water buffalo which were imported during an early attempt at settlement.

[9] It is perhaps not without interest that one of Tip's jokes is imperishably preserved in the files of the Peabody Museum at Harvard. Tip was in Darwin in 1927 when W. Lloyd Warner was collecting at the Native Compound the anthropometric measurements which were afterwards analyzed by W. W. Howells (1937), and like all other natives in town from many tribes he and a number of Tiwi were measured by Warner. On the card for each subject Warner wished to record the personal name of the native. Led by Tip, all the Tiwi measured bestowed upon themselves the most obscene "native name" they could think of, and years later Tip would shout with laughter when telling how Warner faithfully recorded these obscenities, often repeating them several times to make sure of the correct pronunciation.

[10] This set of sentiments surrounding Tip's wife also gives a little more insight into the sex activities of Louis. His reluctance to move in on her, because of the way "the old men would feel," while showing no such reluctance to move in on Mrs. Bob, supports the view implied above that Louis, while sex dominated, was no fool in his amours. He had an intelligent and realistic appreciation of just how much he could get away with.

[11] I use this slang term deliberately, since it expresses somewhat the Tiwi attitude toward those young bachelors who go about seducing the wives of their elders and betters.

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E:Fry D-5 (1913) 1950 OI20 Tiwi OI20

A Bathurst Island Initiation Rite.

Sir:

000 Not many white men can have had the experience of being tried by a native court. The following story may therefore be of interest.

● 114 I had visited a native camp in northern Bathurst Island in March 1913, and had made the acquaintance of an adolescent native boy called Cooper. He was smeared from head to foot with red ochre and wore a collar made of a thin piece of wood bent round his neck with the ends tied together with hair string behind with a strand of string about six inches long hanging down his back terminating in a blob of gum.

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[301]
[302]

[p. 167-A]

881 He was in the *holloponiati* stage of initiation
[901] grade and was forbidden in the camp. One day in great secrecy he showed me some bark arm bracelets known as *tuguti*. A
●[114] month later I was on a Malay lugger in the same region and some natives came out to the lugger in canoes. They told me that Cooper was to take the ceremony for his next degree that afternoon. I persuaded the master of the lugger to put me ashore on Papiau beach, opposite old Fort Dundas.
123 The natives were unwilling to take me with them at first, but finally consented. We walked inland for about four miles and met the main group, all painted for the ceremony. Cooper was said to be out in the mangroves, but came in shortly after about midday. He then went out again for a sugar bag. Having learned a few words of the language I attempted conversation. After a time I attempted to ask something about Cooper's *tuguti*. Immediately the cheerful group about me hushed and everyone seemed very concerned. They had gained the impression that I had stolen the *tuguti*. I tried to explain that I had only looked at them. About twenty of the men seated themselves in a circle and proceeded to discuss the problem. I overheard a few recognizable words at times, *ardjidil waitamanna*, no good white men, *paltoa*, dead, *yergobai*, alligator. I was sitting meanwhile with my back to a pandanus facing a salt water inlet. An emissary from the circle visited me from time to time and questioned me anxiously about what I had done with the *tuguti*. One humourist came over several times, tapped me on the shoulder, and grinningly pointed to the water, saying *yergobai*. Suddenly the discussion stopped, everybody stood up, and cordial relations were resumed as if nothing had happened.

881 Cooper returned about 4 p.m. He washed
[313] and was smeared all over with red ochre except the upper part of the face. Mean-

[P. 167-B]

9:Harney & Elkin E-4, 5 (ca.1940)1943 0120 Tiwi 0120

MELVILLE AND BATHURST ISLANDERS: A SHORT DESCRIPTION

By W. E. Harney and A. P. Elkin[1]

133 *Type of Country.* These islands are fairly large, measuring together about 150 miles from east to west and about 50 miles across the widest part. It is flat country composed of lateritic overburden covering a chalky and, in some places, a green stone full of fossils (Ammonites, Belemites, etc.). At one time it was probably connected with the mainland, and the Apsley Strait which separates the two islands was in those days a continuation of the Adelaide River.

137 The timber is mostly stringybark, bloodwood, and fan palm, while along the shores is the usual jungle growth that can be found in these parts. Wallabies and 136 other game are also present, but no porcupine (echidna), native cat or emu. Dingoes 231 are plentiful. This is the reason for the natives having few dogs. The tame dog 825 (*wongine*), while out hunting alone, is often destroyed by these dingoes, *diamini*. According to the natives, the dingoes do this because they are annoyed with the native dogs for taking some of their food. They (the *diamini*) are the rightful owners and the dog is an intruder.

142 *The Natives.* The natives of these islands, all of whom speak one language, are an unusual type. Curly hair predominates, but occasionally we find a straight-304 haired and a curly haired person in the same family. The cicatrices on their bodies 757 are of the palm leaf pattern, though the straight lines of the mainland people may often be seen. They bear numerous small cuts on their foreheads and various parts of the body, caused by the practice of blood-letting as a cure for sickness.

101 *Tribal Name.* The tribal name of these people is an open question. At one time Mr. Harney called them Nimara, their word for language or talk. They have a word, Tunawini, one black man, but this term can embrace people of other tribes; it comes from the words *tiwi*, men (Hart's name for these natives, *Oceania*, Vol. I, No. 2, p. 167), *tini*, man, *tiya*, woman. They have, however, a term Worunguwe, which embraces them all—clans, horde places, people—and excludes other tribes such as Iwaidja, Larrakia, etc. The Iwaidja people call the Melville Island natives by that name, and Mr. Harney suggests that we should use it. Hart's term is not really a tribal name for it simply means people. Father McGrath suggests a name

[114]

[1] Mr. W. E. Harney is the exceptional layman who understands Aboriginal culture. For a number of years he and I have been collaborating in the study of a number of Aboriginal tribes of the Northern Territory. This article is a brief summary of information gathered by Mr. Harney while engaged in work on Melville and Bathurst Islands. It has been checked, discussed with Mr. Harney, and rewritten by myself. For some parts of this paper readers are advised to refer to the following articles by C. W. M. Hart: "The Tiwi of Melville and Bathurst Islands," *Oceania*, Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 167-180, and "Personal Names Amongst the Tiwi," *Oceania*, Vol. I, No. 3, pp. 80-90.—A. P. Elkin.

10:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1962 OI20 Tiwi OI20

MoBrSo to be the first husband of a girl is not merely a question of preferential choice; a FaSiSo is actually the only cross-cousin of the appropriate age to be considered as a party to a Type A contract. 582

As a first step, let us consider the expected relative ages of the principal parties to a Type A contract: the mother-in-law, the son-in-law, and the expected daughter-wife. A girl becomes a mother-in-law at puberty. For the sake of convenience we may consider this to be at the absolute minimum age of ten. A boy becomes a son-in-law at an age of not less than ten, and he may well be older than this. The minimum age of a Tiwi male is determined by his physical ability to hunt for and otherwise serve his mother-in-law in order to fulfill his part of the contract. 582 606 [581]

We cannot expect the future daughter and wife to be born, on the average, for at least five years and conceivably not for twenty years after the contract is made. However, again for convenience, let us assume that, on the average, the promised daughter will be born ten years from the date of the contract, i.e., when both the mother and the son-in-law are about twenty years old. The young girl will not become a cohabiting wife for approximately another eight or ten years, at which time her promised husband will be at least 28 to 30 years of age. Thus an average difference of twenty years between the ages of a girl and her first husband is to be expected—a difference which is dictated solely by the form and nature of the initial Type A contract. 582

Hart (1930: 282) believed that this twenty-year age difference was largely a result of the excessive practice of polygyny quite evident in his time (ca. 1930). However, in 1954, when most polygynous households had been broken up, an analysis of age differences for all primary unions for women in my sample still reflected the same disparity. Few men under the age of 30 had received wives, and only one girl over the age of ten had not yet been given to her promised husband. The average age difference between wives and first husbands was 18.9 years, with a range of from three to 54 years (Goodale 1959: 72). [114] [595] [593]

I shall next consider the expected relative ages of parents, siblings, and the children of siblings (cousins). If there is a twenty-year age difference between husbands and wives, it logically follows that the same age difference will also exist between the mothers and fathers of children. A woman can expect to have children by the age of twenty, while a man will not be expected to have legitimate children until about the age of 40. If we assume that siblings are of the same relative age (there being a 50/50 chance that brothers and sisters are older or younger), then we can expect that a sister will, on the average, have a child twenty years before her brother has a child. Thus it can be expected that the FaSiSo of a female Ego will be twenty years older than she is, and that her MoBrSo will be twenty years younger. In arranging the primary marriage of a girl, it is thus virtually impossible that she be promised to a MoBrSo who by expectation is twenty years younger than she, and who indeed is 582 593 582 605

10:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1962 O120 Tiwi O120

discussed the factor of relative age as a major determinant of unilateral cross-cousin marriage in the particular type of contract which is universal for first marriages among females and is also the preferred contract for males. I have also described several variant patterns of Tiwi marriage contracts and have shown that these cannot be considered as alternatives to the preferred type but rather as additional patterns which apply only to a woman's secondary marriages. These additional types of contracts are also, to some extent, conditioned by the relative ages of the participants, but the resultant form of marriage may vary from a continuance of patrilateral cross-cousin marriage to matrilateral cross-cousin marriage and even to marriage with certain relatives who are not cross-cousins. The wide variation in contracts leading to secondary marriages for women does not affect the continuance of preferred unilateral cross-cousin marriage or the exchange of wives between particular descent and local groups until the second generation after the variant marriage. Consequently, any change in the social organization of the Tiwi brought about by variations in marriage contracts is a gradual change, but it is also an inevitable and accepted form of change. The Tiwi rightly consider that as individuals they have considerable freedom in the selection of mates from almost any descent and local group and even from among a number of categories of kinsmen. Their Ego-oriented marriage system provides both stability and flexibility, and this is reflected in their system of kin classification.

NOTES

1. The field work on which this paper is based was undertaken in 1954 at the Snake Bay Native Settlement on Melville Island and was jointly financed by the National Geographic Society and the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.
2. In 1959, I used the relative age of spouses in a preliminary analysis of Tiwi unilateral cross-cousin marriage (Goodale 1959). It was with considerable pleasure that I found that a similar analysis by Rose (1960) had quite independently arrived at the same conclusions. Even more interesting was the fact that in cases where I had to calculate expected ages for many of my kin relations, Rose, with more complete age data, could give the average and range in ages for the same relatives, and that in most cases his "average" and my "estimated" ages were the same or within one or two years of one another.
3. For their valuable comments, criticisms, and advice I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to Robbins Burling, Ward H. Goodenough, Edward B. Harper, Barbara S. Lane, and George P. Murdock.
4. Unfortunately, since the only age data collected in the field were for husbands and wives, I have had to use expected ages rather than average or mean ages throughout most of this paper (see note 2 above).
5. The Tiwi believe that sexual intercourse is the direct and only cause of menarche.

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11:Goodale E-5 (1954, 1962) 1963 CR20 Tiwi CI20

Tiwi invoke the power of a yam

By JANE C. GOODALE

IN 1912 SIR BALDWIN SPENCER, a professor of biology at the University of Melbourne, visited Melville Island, in the Timor Sea. There he observed a Tiwi tribal ceremony in which a number of young boys and girls participated in the ritual preparation of a species of yam the Tiwi called *Kulama*. Spencer wrote of this ceremony, "initiation of young men [and women] on Melville Island is intimately associated with what is known as a yam ceremony." This statement is particularly noteworthy, for, in 1954, when I visited the Tiwi for the first time and witnessed the annual *Kulama* ceremony, no initiates took part. The ceremony, however, was still being performed with no significant changes in the complex ritual procedures that Spencer had described more than forty years before.

That the *Kulama* ceremony can and does take place without initiates does not mean that Spencer was wrong to consider it an important part of initiation into adult life. It does mean that many of the new generation of Tiwi believe that such participation cannot prepare them adequately for a way of life that has been radically changed by contact with Western culture during the past fifty years.

In order to understand what this ceremony means to those who still perform it, one must first understand what the Tiwi consider to be adulthood. The Tiwi, now about a thousand in number, have lived for untold centuries on Melville and Bathurst Islands, which are situated thirty miles north of Darwin, the capital city of Australia's Northern Territory. The islands and surrounding waters are well supplied with food, and fresh water is plentiful. Economically and technically the Tiwi have been remarkably conservative. They came to the islands as hunters and gatherers of wild food, using crude chipped stone axes, digging sticks, simple wooden spears, and hunting dogs, and found that little else was needed to exploit the natural resources and to provide themselves with a stable, varied, and adequate diet. With the exception of the wallaby, the land animals of the two islands were small and nocturnal and could simply be collected during the day with little physical effort or skill. The few skills that were necessary were identifying tracks to find game and chopping out or digging up the sleeping animals. Young boys and girls were taught these techniques, since there was no essential sexual division of labor in food-collecting. Boys, however, re-

CR20 TIWI NATIVE on Melville Island expresses a grievance in an original song during the annual three-day *Kulama* ceremony.

[P. 11, (8)]

11:Goodale E-5 (1954, 1962) 1963 CK20 Tiwi CK20

884 the technique had to be made meaningful to the initiates,
174 the lifesaving qualities of this famine food were explained as health-giving powers. A ceremony accompanied by song and dance was certainly a dramatic and effective means of impressing the initiates in preparation methods. The ritual served another purpose as well: because traveling is so
[180] difficult during the rainy season, each household is isolated from the others. The *Kulama* ritual follows this period, and it is natural to expect a reunion to be an occasion to exchange news, settle differences, and tell stories or sing songs that keep traditions alive.

885 MUCH harder to account for is the Tiwi idea of adulthood. That every adult is solely responsible for his own health and wealth, and that success in life depends entirely on personal behavior and industry, are ideals
[171] strangely similar to those that underlie the American way of life, despite the great gulf between the aboriginal culture and our own. But it is not at all surprising that the Tiwi
177 have a great sympathy for much of Western civilization. Many hold the same views as the *Kulama* singer quoted earlier in this article who saw his children wearing clothes
[181] and shoes and going to school to learn to write, for this is the Tiwi's contemporaneous idea of success in a way of life introduced to them only a few short years ago.

Early in the summer of 1962 I revisited the Tiwi for
● [114] two weeks. Although I knew that the Tiwi desired schooling and training in European ways of life and would seize any such opportunity afforded them, I was hardly prepared for the tremendous changes that had taken place during the eight years that had elapsed since my first visit.

Three months after the *Kulama* ceremony of 1954, a
[871] government school was opened. Now all the Tiwi children go to school, and some who have finished the six-year program in the government school have received subsequent training as teaching or nursing assistants. Some others have had "on-the-job" training in various activities connected with a large-scale forestry project that has been started on Melville Island. In fact, all the able-bodied Tiwi men and women are currently employed, and their tasks bear little or no relation to their old life in the bush.

It is perhaps significant—but to me not at all surprising—that I did not hear a single real complaint from the Tiwi regarding their new manner of living. They seem to like it and are anticipating bigger and better things (in the
[324] Western sense) for their children. Hunting has become
[868] a week-end diversion and the children receive little or no real instruction in that traditional skill.

178 SOME aspects of Tiwi life are slow to die, however. Most
784 of the old taboos, the observance of which was considered necessary in the past in order to insure health and wealth, are still observed, although at least one teen-ager expressed doubt that the taboos had any actual effect on
197 the outcome of one's life. Western medicine and public
884 health practices are fast replacing belief in the *Kulama*. During the past eight years only three men have begun the six years of training for *Kulama* initiation, and some of the older men no longer participate in the ceremony. However, as long as even a small number of Tiwi believe in the *Kulama*, the ritual will survive, but I doubt that it will for long.

000 NEAR END of *Kulama* ceremony, performer, although hoarse and tired, must continue to sing until late in the night.
[P. 16, (B)]

12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 0120 Tiwi 0120

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"ALONGA BUSH"

A TIWI HUNT

Jane Goodale

It was April when I arrived on Melville Island, in the company of a small group of men, with the purpose of studying the culture of the Islanders, and it was eight months later that I packed up my notebooks and flew home. During this time we were amply supported by the National Geographic Society and the University Museum.

In my notebooks was all the information I could gather concerning the way of life, past and present, of this particular tribe of Australian Aboriginals. Much of the information in these diaries will eventually find its way into proper chapters of a Ph.D. thesis concerned with the particular economic system, tribal organization, ceremonial activities, and so on. My hand-written notes of day-by-day observations will be transformed through analysis into scientifically derived generalizations so that the information will be in the form most useful to other ethnographers. Included will be the so-called "typical daily life" of a group of interesting and very primitive hunters and gatherers; but because of the demands of time and space some things will be left out: the account of a succession of days, some of which were perhaps almost "typical," but most of which were unique, made so by the personalities of the particular people I was with, by the weather, and by hundreds of little incidents. Only by mixing the days together can one describe a "typical" day and then it becomes a classification and not a true description.

I think something very real is lost by the scientific demands of ethnological reports, so I would like to take this opportunity and space to record some of the incidents which occurred during a series of seven days when I accompanied a group of Melville

12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 OI20 Tiwi OI20

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Fig. 1. Snake Bay Settlement

114 Islanders on a hunt. The trip took us to a small clearing on the right bank of the Paluwiunga River, ten miles upstream from where it empties into the Arafura Sea.

131 A brief glance at the map will help to further pinpoint this location. Ten degrees south of the equator and at a distance of twenty to fifty miles due north from the Australian Northern Territory capital of Darwin, lies the relatively large Melville Island (1,000 square miles), named for Viscount Henry Dundas Melville, First Lord of the Admiralty, who authorized the coastal survey of 1818 during which the island was circumnavigated. To the west, separated by a narrow strait, lies the smaller Bathurst
101 Island. The group of people with whom I found myself camped by the river bank were members of the Tiwi, a tribe of Australian
[161 Aboriginals whose country includes both these islands. Today about
361] seven hundred members of the tribe live near to the southeast corner
797 of Bathurst Island where they are in various ways administered to by the Sacred Heart Mission. On the northern coast of Melville
161 Island, on a hill overlooking Snake Bay, near the mouth of the
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